



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 26, 2007

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House Bill 7163 - An Act Concerning Revisions to Department of Public Health Statutes

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill 7163, which contains many technical revisions that are being requested by the Department to update standards related to our programs.

Sections 7 and 9 revise provisions concerning funding for HIV/AIDS services. Section 7 expands the qualifications for organizations that can receive funds to provide HIV/AIDS services, and expands the recipients of those services to include people at risk for contracting HIV or AIDS. Although the Department of Public Health provides tests for HIV, the department does not provide tests for AIDS. Additionally, the Department does not require agencies that receive funds to perform HIV testing to charge a fee for those tests. Section 9 requires HIV as a content item for the public information program. Current statutory provisions only require AIDS.

The revision to section 10 broadens the eligibility criteria for grant-in-aid applicants and broadens the purpose of those grants. The existing language was drafted in the beginning of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s. The revised language is consistent with current scientific knowledge and practice.

Sections 12, 13, 14, and 23 through 34 revise several statutory provisions related to the regulation of health care facilities and practitioners. More specifically these sections include technical changes related to the definition of assisted living services agencies; composition of medical hearing panels; registration requirements for alternate physicians who are supervising physician assistants; provision of alcohol and drug counseling services by licensed health care providers; educational requirements for licensure as a podiatrist; endorsement provisions for physical therapists, physical therapy assistants and optometrists; continuing education requirements for respiratory care practitioners; and record retention requirements for licensed crematories and funeral homes. The Department continues to work with professional associations on updating practitioner licensing standards and to clarify licensing requirements. As a result of these discussions, the department respectfully requests the Committee to amend this bill to incorporate language that would clarify the licensure requirements for professional counselors, requirements for performance of venipuncture by licensed radiographers, and provisions concerning the supervisory relationship between physicians and physician assistants. The Department continues to work with the professional associations on these proposals and plans to provide draft language to the Committee for its consideration at a later date.

Section 35 will eliminate an existing regulatory deficiency. Currently, the Department may deny the eligibility of an applicant for licensure or may summarily suspend a Registered Sanitarian license for certain actions or conduct. However, the Department may not proceed with permanent punitive action (e.g., revocation, suspension, probationary status) against a Registered Sanitarian license for similar actions or conduct. The revised language would provide the Department with enhanced and clarified enforcement provisions concerning these issues as related to the Registered Sanitarian profession

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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